

Title: Love

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Summary: Fred Weasley is there for his mother when she needs him the most.

Timeframe: Twenty years after the Epilog in Book 7

Audience: General

Category: After Book Seven

Warnings: none

Length: 2 pages

Love

Molly was very, very tired, but she was happy. Only moments ago, her grandchildren and great grandchildren, noisy and wonderful as usual, had been ushered out by her very famous son-in-law and many daughters-in-law. Now, just her children, all her children, were with her, around her.

But where was Arthur? Oh, certainly working late at the Ministry again.

They were all wearing the jumpers she knitted them every year for Christmas. Was it Christmas? No, there were no decorations up. But that did not matter. They were all here now, all around her bed -- Charlie, strong and rugged; Percy, prim and proper; Bill, her first, most handsome but so sadly scarred; Ginny, her one sweet girl; Ron, brave and loyal; and Fred and George -- her very clever and mischievous twins.

Wait... Fred? Yes, Fred. This was curious for some reason. He was still so young and handsome. Her eyes sought him out again. He was close, holding her hand. George was standing well back, at the foot of her bed. His poor ear...

Fred had tears in in eyes.

It was Fred. She could tell. Everything was all right now. She could finally sleep.

She closed her eyes and smiled.

"I can't thank you enough for doing this, Lee."

"It was the least I could do for a friend, George. I hope it was OK with everyone." His red hair was just beginning to change back to curly black, though now with a good deal of gray in it.

“Yes. Everyone understood that her dementia was very bad, and she was mostly living in the past. After the stroke, I believed she needed to see Fred one last time. She was lately always asking for him.”

“It was lucky you had the lock of hair,” said Lee.

“I came across it in my box of ‘treasures’ last year. Fred had intended to give it to a pretty Muggle girl who worked in a paper shop in Ottery St. Catchpole. That was during the Christmas holidays after we opened Wizard Wheezes in Diagon Alley,” George explained.

“Fred fancied her, but she liked me because of my card ‘tricks’. One day I spied him with her pretending to be me. I didn’t say anything, but then later I saw him at home cutting the lock of his hair and put two and two together...”

George paused, looking a little wistful, and then continued, “Anyway, he left it ‘unattended’ and I switched it with a lock of polecat hair which I temporarily transfigured to look like his. He gave it to her and she was delighted. But then it changed back, bad smell and all, and she was really offended. She threw it at him and accused him of playing a dirty trick on her and told him to get lost.”

“Did Fred suspect you and get mad?” asked Lee.

“Of course, he knew it was me, but he had a great laugh. In fact, we both did,” chuckled George. “After all, he was trying to ‘jump my claim’ as it were, and I tripped him up fair and square. We were always pulling that kind of stuff on each other. Just more ideas to include in our future plans,” he mused.

George continued, “But seriously, when I saw the real lock of Fred’s hair again, I knew what I had to do for Mum. I was scared though. I had to try it first to prove to myself I could bring it off. I knew it had to be more than just the appearance. It had to be the subtle mannerisms too. I had to practice. Twins watch each other very closely, you know, more than ordinary siblings.”

He sighed, then said affectionately, “Mum could *almost* always tell the difference. That was her private joke with us. She just *pretended* to everyone that she could *never* tell the difference between us because we were identical, *down to the last freckle*. It took a real effort to fool her, and usually only worked when she was very tired, distracted, or tipsy.”

George paused for a moment, and then said, “That’s why I couldn’t let *you* be Fred. Only I could.”

Lee watched as the young adult Fred Weasley slowly transformed back into middle-aged George Weasley.

The End